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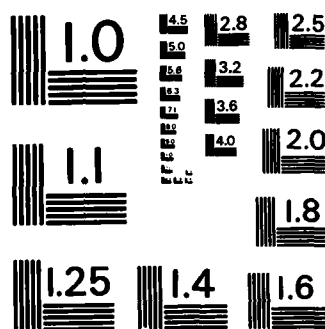
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THE SOVIET SOLDIER - PREMILITARY AND POLITICAL TRAINING

by

COLONEL JACK R. ALSOP

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The author examines premilitary and political training of the Soviet Soldier as currently practiced under the current Soviet Military Service Law. He discusses and analyses various aspects of this training to include: training centers, general premilitary training, basic military training, summer camp, military instructors, specialist training, sports clubs, military sports and physical training, training goals, post-induction training, NCO and specialist training, results of premilitary training, and political indoctrination. ←			

# THE SOVIET SOLDIER - PREMILITARY AND POLITICAL TRAINING

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COLONEL JACK R. ALSOP

UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE

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### UNIVERSAL MILITARY SERVICE LAW

The current Soviet Universal Military Service Law became effective on 1 January 1968 and replaced the 1939 Service Law. In addition to lowering the draft age from 19 to 18 it shortened the obligatory military service term from 3 to 2 years for the Army and from 4 to 3 years for the Navy. (Goure, 1973) To meet the requirements of the armed forces for better trained soldiers and in order to compensate for the reduction in time available for in-service basic training, the Service Law established a compulsory system for preinduction training in fundamental military knowledge and basic military technical skills, to affect all students in the 9th and 10th grades between the ages of 16 and 18. The training is conducted for students in the secondary educational institution attended and for urban and rural working youth at their place of employment. The Service Law also required increased premilitary training of military specialists for the Armed Forces.

The Service Law provided for the establishment of the pre-induction training program under the auspices of the Ministry of Defense operating in conjunction with the Volunteer Society for Assistance to the Army, Navy, and Air Force (DOSAAF). While the DOSAAF is responsible for implementing the preinduction training the Ministry of Defense determines the list of desired specialties and requisite training programs. (Goldhamer, 1975)

### TRAINING CENTERS

DOSAAF is charged with providing the instructors, manuals, training aids, and military and other hardware wherever the training is given. The Service Law requires that heads of local governments to provide the premises for training and the storage of equipment. The local military commissariats are also required to select military instructors, usually reserve officers and NCO's, and securing training facility support of nearby garrisons. Once the training program is underway, the local installation may take over its operation, with DOSAAF shifting to a support role. (Federal Research Division)

Military units may take on the sponsorship of a premilitary training organization, usually located in the vicinity of the unit. The military commanders assist them in strengthening their material training base and improving the military and patriotic education that they offer. (Flyagin, 1973) A sponsoring unit is likely to assist in setting up a firing range or military office at a school. Military units actively participate in tactical training exercises and firing training for the students. Unit Officers and NCO's are required to visit schools to participate in, observe, and advise the local military training program. At the end of each year a 5 day training exercise is conducted under field conditions. During these exercises the military units provide exercise facilities and assistance to the instructors.

### GENERAL PREMILITARY TRAINING

The premilitary training program covers a wide range of activities for students. It provides formal and informal instruction in the basics of civil defense and the fundamentals of military affairs, practical experience in military-oriented skills, sports, and physical and psychological conditioning for military service. The major aim of premilitary training is to provide the student the equivalent of basic training with the intended final destination of the DOSAAF trainee being one of the branches of the Soviet Armed Forces which is composed of the following nine elements: (ACSI)

- Ground forces
  - motorized rifle
  - tactical rockets and artillery
  - armor
  - troop air defense
- Strategic rocket forces
  - land-based missile
- National air defense troops
  - interceptor aircraft
- Air force
  - long range bombers, transport, tactical air support
- Navy
- Civil defense troops
- Internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Security
- Border troops of the K.G.B.
- Support troops
  - rear services
  - building and construction
  - railway
  - pipeline
  - food production



### BASIC MILITARY TRAINING

Under the Service Law the nucleus of the training program is a 140 hour course that is included in the curriculum in the 9th grade. For potential inductees in the 16-18 age group, the training is provided at or near their place of work. Upon completion of the 140 hour course, students attend camp assemblies where they participate in a five day tactical field exercise.

Although the basic course is centered on the 140 hours of classroom instruction it also includes frequent homework assignments. With the homework assignments and the 5 day field exercise the course actually encompasses over 200 hours of actual instruction, study and practical training. This compares to the one month initial basic training for inductees upon entry into the Soviet Army. This has enabled the Soviet Army to reduce the length of initial basic training for new inductees from the approximately four weeks previously required to a week for those trainees that have completed premilitary training. (Goldhamer, 1975)

Basic premilitary training emphasizes a general background of the Soviet Armed Forces and basic forms of combat. This includes an introduction to the regulations of the armed forces, basic drill instruction and tactical theory. As a sample of theoretical classroom studies in a course on the "Principles

of Combat Actions of a Motorized Rifle Platoon", the students are required to know the organization of five, coordinated operations, their significance in combat and in maneuvers, as well as the concepts of march, approach march and battle formations. (FRD)

A major block of instruction relates to weapons training, including the care and maintenance of the light machine gun, the automatic rifle and the anti-tank grenade. Where possible students are instructed in the firing of these weapons. Initially there were a shortage of firing ranges, weapons and ammunition in a number of the schools, however, by 1973-74 all secondary schools possessed the necessary facilities and equipment.

The course of instruction on civil defense includes defensive measures (gas masks and protective clothing), the characteristics of nuclear and chemical weapons, the operation of radiation and chemical weapons detectors and the methods of operating in contaminated areas. The civil defense training has a definite military orientation, aiming to familiarize the student with the destructive characteristics of nuclear and chemical weapons, individual protective clothing (gas masks and respirators) and its use, the operation of radiation and chemical reconnaissance instruments, the building of shelters and their use, and methods of conducting reconnaissance and rescue work in destroyed areas.

The basic course for females is altered by substituting drill and military armament for first aid.

The basic course of instruction given in the 9th and 10th grades is as follows:

<u>SUBJECTS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOURS</u>	
	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
<u>9TH GRADE</u>		
1. The Soviet Armed Forces Character and Peculiarities	10	7
2. Armed Forces Regulations	5	4
3. Firing Instructions	10	8
4. Tactics	6	2
5. Drill	4	0
6. Civil Defense	35	35
7. First Aid	0	14
	<u>70</u>	<u>70</u>

<u>10TH GRADE</u>		
1. The Soviet Armed Forces Character and Peculiarities	10	10
2. Armed Forces Regulations	8	6
3. Firing Instructions	31	17
4. Tactics	11	2
5. Drill	5	0
6. Civil Defense	5	0
7. First Aid	0	35
	<u>70</u>	<u>70</u>

The training program provides for training in certain basic military technical specialties, e.g., military topographer and radiation monitor since the necessary equipment is usually available in secondary schools. Particularly in vocational-technical

schools, increased emphasis is placed on acquiring certain basic skills in military specialties such as vehicle driver, motorcycle operator, radio-telephone operator, and electrician.

#### SUMMER CAMP

Ninth and tenth grade students as part of their premilitary training undergo tactical field training exercises at summer camp. The camps provide for the practical training aspects of the pre-military training program, supplementing the military knowledge and skills gained in the studies conducted at school or at work. The camps are established, maintained and operated by the course directors, military instructors and plant chiefs under the guidance of the military commissariats and DOSAAF committees. The main goal of the camp assembly is to give the trainees the actual experience of living under military regulations, participating in tactical field exercises, working on military-technical specialties, and increasing physical fitness through military-oriented sports and physical culture activities.

Normally the camps are held at a local military installation during the first week of summer vacation after the 9th or 10th grade for students, and for working youth in urban areas at various times for 2 or 3 days at a time without interrupting the work schedule. For rural youth, camps are often held in the late autumn or winter

after the farming year has ended. Training is conducted at military sports camps or by daily field trips where no military installations are readily accessible.

The training camps take place over a 5 day period for a total of 30 hours. The students are assigned to platoons, billeted in tents, and fed from mobile field kitchens. Students may also be housed in pioneer camps near military installations, with visits from servicemen of the sponsoring military unit. Weapons, combat equipment and ammunition are allocated by local military commands. The exercises include firing live rounds from automatic weapons, military marches and war games. Students acquaint themselves with the activity of a military unit and with military discipline and regulations. The command staff is specially selected, usually has undergone some prior training, and consists of NCO's and junior officers of the reserves, who are given the posts of squadron and company commanders. Regular officers may be assigned as chiefs of the camps, while regular NCO's furnish assistance to the military instructor.

Firing ranges of DOSAAF and of sports societies are used, along with radiation and chemical monitoring instruments, entrenching tools, means of individual chemical defenses, spotters, markers, targets, dummies, mockup of weapons, etc. If marksmanship exercises cannot be organized, a 12 kilometer march is substituted. All elements of the field exercise is conducted with a full field pack.

During the week long field exercise only a few hours are set aside for marching drill since these are part of morning PT sessions, formations and movement to and from training and dining areas. The drill instructor organizes the training so as to use his designated assistants from the military unit.

The training camp for rural workers is less vigorous and is conducted over a 15 day period. Trainees attend the camps during vacation periods after the farming season has ended. They study for 3-4 hours per day with the remainder of the time devoted to physical fitness training and military games. The trainees are assigned to platoons, live under military regulations and carry out routine camp and guard duties. Each trainee serves at least once as the company duty officer or orderly. Swimming and shooting are taught at least once and marches, races and other competition are held.

Some training camps for urban and rural workers are set up as job camps to render assistance to local areas and facilities in agricultural or repair operations. Military discipline is strictly enforced at these camps. Political instruction is required at all camps such as lectures, discussions, readings, etc.

Trainees at the summer camps receive certificates confirming completion of the training course. Military commissariats may assign trainees a military specialty based on the individual's performance at camp.

## INSTRUCTORS

The military instructors are essentially concerned with predraft training for the 9th and 10th grade students. As with any instrumental effort, the key element is the quality of the instructor. One of the major obstacles to effective implementation of the premilitary training program is the lack of qualified instructors to fill the positions in schools and training centers. Premilitary instructors are filled with reserve and retired officers with reserve enlisted men used primarily in reserve areas. It is likely that the prescribed program, including rural enterprises, could easily require 100,000 military instructors employed in full or part-time duties. (Goldhamer, 1975)

The military instructor is subordinate to the school director who is in charge of the premilitary training program for the school. The instructor is also responsible to military authorities for the quality of the instructions and for the creation of the material base for the training at the school. The other teachers at the schools have responsibilities for contributing to the premilitary education of the students, e.g., history, geography, science, etc.

New military instructors are required to attend a one month training period which is normally held at army installations to study teaching methods and equipment. Each year a 3 day course is conducted to train the military instructors for the week long field exercise that is conducted during the summer months. Instructors in plants and on farms, however, are less likely to have military

experience comparable to those who teach in secondary schools and require additional training in military and technical areas as well as instructorial techniques. (FRD) Military instructors at secondary schools receive the same pay as that of the school principal.

#### SPECIALISTS TRAINING

Specialist training is given to selected students in addition to the training provided in the premilitary training course. By 1973 one of every three men inducted into active service had acquired a military specialty. (Goldhamer, 1975) The DOSAAF regulation provides leadership for the development of military-technical types of sport - - "aircraft, helicopter, parachutes, gliders, automobile, motorcycle, radio, underwater, motorboat, marksmanship, and other." (FRG, 1973)

DOSAAF specialist training prepares students for military service as well as providing technically trained individuals for the civilian economy, e.g., truck drivers, bulldozer operators, radio operators, etc. (Goldhamer, 1975)

Non-DOSAAF specialized training is carried out at trade and technical schools. Trade school instructions in machine tools, automotive repair and other specialties include one-fourth of all Soviet youth receiving post-primary education. (FRG) The quality of training in the specialized areas is considered to be better than the level of general premilitary training.



### SPORTS CLUBS

Sports Clubs are established at every territorial level and are located at schools, training points and training centers. They are voluntary organizations for youth who desire to pursue hobbies or technical types of sports which provide the individual with practical training and experience which can be put to use in the military service. This training is a follow-up of the military studies, marksmanship and physical education provided at the schools. Sports Clubs are established in rural areas, normally at large enterprises or farms under the auspices of a DOSAAF club for agricultural machine and equipment operators. The sports club council directs the activities, approves funds for acquiring and repairing training and sports equipment. Instructors are appointed by the DOSAAF committee. The level of training is considered to have improved each year. (FRD)

DOSAAF automotive clubs train chauffeurs, tractor operators, mechanics for both the armed forces and the civilian economy. Most clubs possess classrooms, repair facilities and training areas. Mostly the men who are inducted into paratroop units have been trained in the Aeroclub system.

Rural working youth undergo premilitary specialist training at DOSAAF clubs even if it requires they be absent from their place of employment. The employing organization is required to retain

their jobs and to pay them fifty percent of their normal pay throughout the training period. Employers also pay the transportation expenses to and from the training area and a quarters allowance for the time the trainees are away.

#### MILITARY SPORTS AND PHYSICAL TRAINING

Accompanying the premilitary training offered in schools and training points and specialist training is an extensive program of physical conditioning and training in endurance, dexterity and courage designed to equip predraft and draft age youth with skills in "overcoming natural and artificial obstacles and in developing the ability to act quickly and effectively". These aims are carried out through physical education classes at schools, enterprises and at DOSAAF military sports clubs. The levels of the program are: (FRD)

<u>STAGE</u>	<u>PROGRAM NAME</u>	<u>AGE GROUP</u>
1	Courage and Skill	10 - 13
2	Young Sportsmen	14 - 15
3	Strength and Courage	16 - 18
4	Physical Perfection	19 - 39 males 19 - 34 females
5	Cheerfulness and Health	39+ males 34+ females

The first two levels of the program for ages 10 - 15 years includes

sports introduction, calisthenics, marksmanship training, camping and hiking. The graduated program leads to the third level which is the most important vis-a-vis the premilitary training of students. The third level of physical training establishes standards for running, jumping, grenade throwing, skiing, swimming, pull-ups, hiking and civil defense exercises. Points are awarded for meeting minimum standards and badges and certificates are awarded to those who successfully qualify. The most important goal of all the sports activities is to enable a large number of draft-age youth ready to enter military service to pass the third level test and be equipped with at least one military technical specialty. DOSAAF clubs and training organizations are responsible for administering the tests. DOSAAF conducts mass testing through competition held at sports camps, assemblies and large sports festivals. Sponsors from local troop units and military schools serves as assistants and consultants for the games staffs and provide aid in conducting competition, hikes, tactical games and military sports camp assemblies.

The Orlenok game for 16 - 18 year old students in general educational, vocational and secondary specialized schools comprises an entire complex of competition, contests, relays, hikes and tactical games. It is intended to aid students in acquiring knowledge and skills in basic military training, acquiring a military specialty and successfully passing level three standards. It also includes studies in the listing of the armed forces, tactics, marksmanship,

rill, medical and physical training and civil denfense exercises. Each participant must learn how to shoot accurately, swim and cross water obstacles, drive a motor vehicle, operate boats and to operate radio equipment. In 1970, in honor of the 100th anniversary of Lenin's death, 6000,000 competitions were held with two million participants achieving level three standards. (FRD)

In the rural areas, the lack of athletic fields, rifle ranges and gym equipment is critical. The military units have been slow in placing training areas, equipment and instructors at the disposal of rural sports clubs. Efforts are being made to create military sports teams at rural training points and to provide them with instructions and training to enable them to pass the rating standards. For both urban and rural working youth, the program of premilitary training is supplemented by an 80 hour physical culture section. This program is the responsibility of physical culture and hygiene workers, trainees, teachers and workers of sports committees and members of DOSAAF. The major goals are to pass the physical standards and to achieve qualifications in a military sport.

#### TRAINING GOALS

The goals of premilitary and specialist training programs is to provide basic military training to all students in the 9th and 10th school year and to 16 to 18 year olds at their place of work and to

provide selected students and workers with specialist training useful to the armed forces. The goal to provide basic training is designed to be a substitute for the one month basic training given an armed forces draftee. The providing of specialist training is designed to reduce the amount of time required by the military to train specialist. As covered previously, specialist training may include activities from firing a rifle or driving a vehicle and repairing it to the handling of technical weapons and equipment. Another goal of premilitary training is to provide intensive political indoctrination to the trainee.

#### POST INDUCTION TRAINING

Selection of men for military service is the responsibility of the draft commission composed of the local military commissioner, Communist party representatives, a police officer and a physician. They must meet quotas including NCO and specialist candidates established by the Ministry of Defense. In making selection decisions, premilitary training is an important factor in addition to education level and physical abilities. The draft commission selects those having leadership qualifications for various positions. This is particularly important since both officers and NCO's are not drawn from the lower enlisted ranks but are specifically trained for leadership positions. Since NCO's are inductees, the ability of the commission to determine those with leadership potential will largely determine the effectiveness of the NCO corps in the Soviet Army.

The commission also selects men with appropriate aptitudes for individual military specialties. Selection of specialist candidates include leadership potential since many assignments for specialists require that the individual have the ability to command. (Goldhamer, 1973)

The degree of an individual inductee's success in premilitary training is an aid to the commission in the selection of potential leaders and specialists. It also helps the commission to identify men who cannot readily adapt to military life.

Upon being called to active duty in the armed forces, inductees are sent to Military Districts to commence their training. Inductees are dispersed throughout all Military Districts to avoid any concentration of one particular ethnic group in any Military District or individual unit. This policy of dispersion may limit the effectiveness of premilitary training in reducing postindoctrination training time due to the fact that those who have completed premilitary training are dispersed rather than concentrated.

Usually draftees are sent immediately to an existing operational unit, rather than to a special training unit. Inductees are grouped together into a training platoon for the "Course of the New Soldier". (Goldhamer 1975) This course is normally of four weeks duration but may be shortened if most of the new recruits have prior training or it may be expanded subject to the requirements of the operational unit. If only a few recruits are sent to a unit they are sent to

their unit of ultimate assignment to learn their skills through on-the-job training. If this is the case the training of the recruit is the responsibility of the man he is to replace who may remain with the unit for only a few weeks.

The conduct and organization of initial basic training for inductees reporting immediately to an operational unit is determined by the appropriate commander and varies depending on the mission of the unit, the number of inductees reporting and the availability of training personnel who can be relieved from operational duties to conduct the training. In larger units, initial training usually follows a one month format and unit NCO's are permanently assigned as training instructors, while in the smaller units the training personnel are drawn from NCO's and enlisted men with operational functions who serve for one month as trainees and then return to their normal duties. The length of the course can vary considerably depending on whether the recruit's assigned mission or specialty is better taught through group or individual instruction. (Goldhamer, 1973)

Direct assignment to an operational unit is the most common procedure for inductees and is a matter of routine for the simpler specialties and non-specialties such as rifleman, drivers, administrative personnel, etc. When certain specialties require some special instruction other than on-the-job training, recruits of similar specialties from neighboring units are trained together in their specialty while receiving basic training from their assigned unit. (FRD, 1973)

### NCO AND SPECIALIST TRAINING

Inductees selected for NCO and specialist training are generally assigned to specialized training divisions for full-time instruction in their specialty. Since passage of the 1968 Service Law specialist training for new recruits has been reduced from one year to six months so that recruits would serve at least eighteen months with their operational unit. Since military service has been reduced by one year, premilitary training particularly specialized training, are particularly valuable due to the increased need for greater technical proficiency in certain specialties. Even though the pre-military specialty may be fairly simple, such as driving a truck, it may permit the recruit to begin his course work on vehicle repair without first learning how to drive. (FRD)

### PREMILITARY TRAINING RESULTS

Although very little recent data is available as to the effectiveness of the premilitary and specialist training programs, it seems safe to assume that the completion of most aspects of basic military training prior to induction will assist in training a combat-ready force within the two-year active duty period. The assignment of pretrained specialists to units requiring their skills eliminates much of the training time that would be taken up during the two



year active duty period. The establishment of military training centers and DOSAAF sports clubs is valuable not only in preparing youth with premilitary training but also for use during mobilization and for utilization of recruits. Additionally many of the skills acquired in premilitary and specialist training are transferred to their civilian occupation. The involvement of reserve and retired personnel as instructors and evaluators in premilitary training helps to maintain skill levels of those conducting the program.

Minister of Defense, Marshal A.A. Grechko, stated that "trainees of the defense establishment are serving well, joining the ranks faster and becoming rated specialists and skilled fighting men". This is a result of painstaking work done by DOSAAF committees, chiefs, instructors and teachers of the DOSAAF clubs in the training of replacements for the armed forces. (FRD)

As assessment of Soviet premilitary training is generalized by the Deputy Commander of the Moscow Military District in a statement about the training of replacements and the military-patriotic training of youth: (FRD) "To a certain degree, the premilitary training of youth compensates for the reduction in the period of active service and is furnishing positive results. After completing his course of instruction, a draft age youth knows how a soldier must function in battle, and he has a good knowledge of automatic weapons, light machineguns and grenades. During his training, he receives a certain amount of practice in firing these weapons. Finally, he acquires

knowledge and skill in a particular military-technical specialty - as a motor vehicle driver, motorcycle operator, radio telephone operator, electrician, etc." Dr. Goldhamer's analysis is that inductees who have completed premilitary training tend to have either minimal preparation for basic training or have the equivalent of three or four weeks. (Goldhamer, 1972)

#### POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

In addition to the goals of premilitary training to provide basic military training to secondary level students and working youths and to provide specialist training to selected youth a third goal is to provide intensive political indoctrination to trainees. DOSAAF established "military patriotic schools" attached to military schools, military units, DOSAAF training organizations, civil aviation schools and other organizations of a military-oriented character. (FRD, 1973)

At the base of the military indoctrination of students, as well as their political orientation, are the propagandizing of Communist Party and government policies on national defense and instruction in the military oath and in internal service regulations of the armed forces in respect to general duties. The ideological orientation of youth nearing induction emphasizes: the benefits and obligations of an officer; individual psychological qualities; general proficiencies (alertness during guard duty, logical solution to problems; organizational

qualities; ability to control emotions; and a personal Communist outlook and ideals). Additionally, other courses are taught at schools, e.g., social sciences, humanities, history, and literature, are geared toward appropriate ideological indoctrination. (FRD, 1973)

As stated previously, students receive instruction in armed forces regulations in the military patriotic schools. Of great importance for the successful solution of tasks facing the Soviet Army are the military regulations, which considerably promote the cohesion, efficiency and teamwork of military collectives and contribute to further strengthening the combat readiness of subunits, units, and ships of the armed forces as a whole". (Soviet Military Review, Feb 1982)

The principal proposition of the Soviet regulations which came into effect in 1975 are:

- Interior Service Regulations of the Armed Forces - regulations covering combat training, leisure, general and special duties, behavior, military courtesy and the issuance and carrying out of orders.

- Disciplinary Regulations of the USSR Armed Forces - regulations covering military discipline, awards and punishments and complaint procedures.

- Garrison and Guard Duty Regulations of the USSR Armed Forces - regulations cover procedures for performing garrison and guard duties and the rights and duties of officials and servicemen.

- Drill Regulations of the USSR Armed Forces - regulations

describes mounted and dismounted drill, requirements for drill practice and saluting and review procedures.

"The life of the armed forces, the internal order and relations between commanders and subordinates is strictly regulated by manuals of military law. This, commanders have the right to issue orders to their subordinates and duty bound to verify their execution. Subordinates must obey their superiors implicitly...A commander's order is law to his subordinates. The order must be carried out implicitly and within the specified time. The manuals enjoin servicemen to respect their commanders and seniors, to protect them in action, strictly to observe the rules of military comity and be properly dressed." (Borisov, 1973)

Moral-political training attempts to develop in soldiers a Marxist-Leninist world outlook, communist ideals, convictions and moral principals of behavior. It is aimed at arming personnel with a communist ideology and an understanding of the policies of the Communist Party and government, of USSR's state interests, and of the essence and character of war in defense of the socialist homeland. (Grechko, 1975)

The commander of the Bactic Military District described recruits with premilitary training as being familiar with the fundamentals of military service, able to shoot and to drive a motor vehicle, familiar with radio and telegraph, and as being 'politically and psychologically conditioned for their role in defending their country." (FRD)

### THE SOVIET MILITARY OATH

"I BORIS KOSMANOV, A CITIZEN OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS, BY JOINING THE RANKS OF THE ARMED FORCES, TAKE AN OATH AND SOLEMNLY SWEAR TO BE AN UPRIGHT, BRAVE, DISCIPLINED, VIGILANT SOLDIER, TO STRICTLY PRESERVE MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT SECRETS, AND TO EXECUTE, WITHOUT CONTRADICTION, ALL MILITARY REGULATIONS AND ORDERS OF COMMANDERS AND SUPERIORS. I SWEAR TO LEARN CONSCIENTIOUSLY THE TRADE OF WAR, TO PROTECT WITH ALL MEANS THE MILITARY AND PEOPLES' PROPERTY, AND TO BE DEVOTED TO MY PEOPLE, MY SOVIET HOMELAND, AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO MY LAST BREATH. I WILL ALWAYS BE READY TO REPORT, BY ORDER OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, AS A SOLDIER OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR THE DEFENSE OF MY HOMELAND, THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS. I SWEAR TO DEFEND IT BRAVELY AND WISELY WITH ALL MY STRENGTH AND IN HONOR, WITHOUT REGARD FOR MY LIFE TO ACHIEVE A COMPLETE VICTORY OVER THE ENEMY. SHOULD I BREAK MY SOLEMN OATH, MAY THE SEVERE PENALTIES OF THE SOVIET LAW, THE OVERALL HATRED, AND THE CONTEMPT OF THE WORKING MASSES STRIKE ME."

All members of the Soviet Army take the oath of allegiance to the Soviet government, their country and to their people. This practice started when the Soviet Army was formed in 1918.

Originally the oath was administered on a collective basis on one of the state holidays, usually 1 May. In addition to being a traditional practice, it was administered collectively due to the fact that most of the Russian population was illiterate. Today, however, each soldier reads the oath of allegiance aloud and signs it in the presence of his commander or superior. "Every Soviet soldier, regardless of rank, considers it his sacred duty and highest honor to be loyal to his oath of allegiance, to fulfill its demands to the letter, as embodied in the military regulations, orders, and instructions of his commanders and superiors." (Borisov,

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